



Orientation Meeting Three

Phone Communications Guidelines for Parents

Background

It is not reasonable or convenient for students to call home every night, from every city, at specific times, nor upon arrival. The availability of telephones is unpredictable and we recommend calling home as seldom as possible, as frequent phone calls home tend to increase feelings of homesickness.

The following are some general guidelines for when you do speak on the phone with your traveling Ambassadors.

Remember, please DO

- Keep a positive tone on the phone. State how proud you are of him or her being a student Ambassador.
- Ask about what your child has seen and done so far.
- If your child is homesick, suggest she/he talk to a roommate or new friend about it. Knowing that they are not alone in feeling homesick can ease the sense of loneliness for homesick children.
- Try faxing to the hotel instead of calling by phone should you need to communicate.
- Save bad news that can wait until your child returns home. If the news is important, speak with a delegation leader first, so someone can be with your child to provide support.
- Remind your child to call from pay-phones using a pre-paid phone card or personal cell phone, NOT from hotel room phones.
- Realize that exhaustion and homesickness can make your child very emotional. Even when having a wonderful experience, the sound of your voice, especially if from an answering machine, may make your child teary. Please don't overreact.

Please remember that if there is any kind of emergency, you will be contacted by the delegation leaders or program office. The program office is staffed 24/7 while students are traveling. Remember, if you do not hear from them, they are fine. "No news is good news!"

Please DO NOT

- Let your child hear you cry on the phone. This only makes homesickness worse.
- Encourage your child to call home more. There is a direct correlation between the frequency of phone calls home and homesickness. Calling home makes homesickness worse!
- Expect your child not to call home for at least 2-3 days after departing. The program is action-packed and with jet lag, delegates are pretty tired during the first few days.

NOTE: Delegation leaders will do their best to activate a phone tree or notify parents about the delegation's arrival via email, blog, or other means of communication established during orientation meetings.